(b) whether this proposed cess will be in addition to the Passenger Service Fee being levied by AAI and the Congestion Surcharge imposed by private carriers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) and (b) The matter is under consideration of the Government.

Cess to fund AERA operations

148. SHRI B.K. HARIPRASAD: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the competition Commission of India has recommended that the proposed Airport Economic Regulatory Authority (AERA) should impose a cess on airline companies and operators to fund its operations;

(b) if so, whether this proposed cess is likely to be passed on to the air traveller by the carriers; and

(c) whether the fuel surcharge presently levied is likely to be reduced on account of fall in Aviation Turbine fuel prices?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) For financial independence of the Airport Economic Regulatory Authority (AERA), Competition Commission of India (CCI) had proposed that there must be a provision in law to levy some kind of charge on the sector that it is going to regulate as a source of revenue.

(b) There is no proposal to levy such cess.

(c) Air fares are not regulated by the Government after repeal of Air Corporation Act, 1953. Domestic Airlines are free to charge air fares, including any surcharge in their commercial judgement.

Foreign Pilots in Aviation Industry

149. SHRI MOINUL HASSAN: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that expatriate pilots are increasingly becoming a part of India's aviation industry and are poised to out number their Indian counterparts due to increasing demand for pilots; and

(b) if so, the steps Government propose to take in this regard?